

What is claimed is:

1. A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating at least an endoscope and performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, comprising:

an accommodating recess section for accommodating an elongated and thin insertion part of the endoscope having a flexible section; and

pressing force preventing means for preventing local pressing forces from being applied to the outer surface of the flexible section when accommodated in the accommodating recess section.

2. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the pressing force preventing means is a lid member provided with respect to the accommodating recess section wherein the insertion part of the endoscope is accommodated.

3. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 2, wherein the lid member is capable of separating the insertion part of the endoscope from the peripheral elements of the endoscope.

4. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 3, wherein the lid member is capable of positioning the peripheral elements of the endoscope on the opposite side thereof to the side

corresponding to the accommodating recess section, when it is closed against the accommodating recess section.

5. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 3, wherein the lid member is provided with a restricting member which surrounds and restricts the insertion part to a predetermined shape on the opposite side thereof to the side facing the accommodating recess section, when the lid is closed against the accommodating recess section.

6. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 2, wherein the lid member is formed with a cutaway section through which a bend operating knob provided on the operating part of the endoscope can project, after the endoscope is accommodated.

7. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the pressing force preventing means is constituted by providing a flexible restricting member which deforms under a predetermined external pressure, in the accommodating recess section.

8. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 7, wherein the restricting member which surrounds and restricts the insertion part of the endoscope to a predetermined shape comprises the lid member of the vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization.

9. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the pressure force preventing means is a separate member from the vessel and is a protecting cylindrical body, that can be subject to high-temperature and high-pressure steam sterilization, having an internal diameter that is greater than the external form of the insertion part of the endoscope.

10. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the accommodating recess section is formed by a restricting member which surrounds and restricts the insertion part of the endoscope to a predetermined shape, the restricting member defining a clearance with respect to the insertion part.

11. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the accommodating recess section is formed by a restricting member which prevents predetermined portions of the insertion part of the endoscope from contacting or overlapping with other portions of the endoscope.

12. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the accommodating recess section is formed by a flexible restricting member which restricts the insertion part of the endoscope to a predetermined shape and which deforms to a greater extent than the insertion part in response to a predetermined external force.

13. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the accommodating recess section is formed with smooth faces contacting the insertion part of the endoscope.

14. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the pressing forces applied locally to the outer surface of the insertion part of the endoscope exceed the gravitational forces generated by the predetermined portions of the insertion part receiving these pressing forces.

15. The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 1, wherein the insertion part of the endoscope has a bending shape having a gentle bending radius which does not produce wrinkles in the outer surface of the insertion part of the endoscope.